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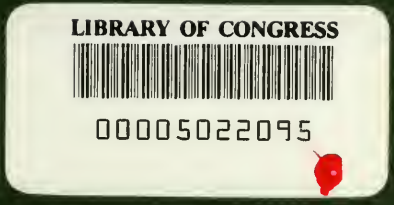

SPEECH

OF

HON. THOMAS J. HENLEY, OF INDIANA,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 26, 1848.

In Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, in reply to Mr. TOMPKINS of Mississippi, and Mr. BARROW of Tennessee.

Mr. HENLEY said, that whilst he had no ambition to figure as a debater upon that floor, and had no desire to mingle in the party discussions there, he claimed, nevertheless, to have been a close observer of what had been passing around him. He had not taken notes of the speech of the gentleman [Mr. PALFREY] who had just taken his seat; but he could not help being forcibly impressed with the contrast in the reception of an abolition speech now, and at the time when he first had the honor of a seat in that House. He had then heard slight allusions to the question of abolition, but never without its producing excitement on all sides of the House, even with the Whig party from the South. But this speech—the most forcible and able of the kind he had ever heard—had received the marked attention, had elicited the smiles and the apparent approbation of the Whigs from the slaveholding States. He believed the abolitionists only ask to be heard by the South, and they promise to convince them of the practicability of abolition doctrines. They had been heard on this occasion, and the South—the Whig portion of it—had seemed, by their smiles and other evidences of approbation, to have given in their adhesion to the doctrines of the able gentleman from Massachusetts. This was certainly something gained, and more than he had expected, in so short a time. He was certain of one thing, however, and he would tell it for the benefit of all concerned: From what he had seen since he had been there, it would be a long time before a Democrat would receive the countenance and smiles of his party, either North or South, in making such a tirade against the institutions of the South, and, he would add, against the Constitution itself, and the very Union which gives us so many and such inestimable blessings, and which has been sealed by the blood of the noble sires of degenerate sons, who now assail its sacred compromises. The secret of all this (said Mr. H.) is already out; the gentleman from Massachusetts has told it himself. The Whig party is in a minority without the abolitionists. Their majority is five, and there are six abolition members. Tell it not in Gath—publish it not in the streets of the southern cities! In the South, they would hang an abolitionist on the nearest tree; in Congress they are beholden to him for the very power they hold in this House, and are taunted to their teeth that they cannot move a peg without him. It is a fact—the South may look to it as she chooses—the Whig party is now under the control of the abolitionists in this House.

Mr. H. had no remark to make upon the subject of slavery in the States. He had no desire to discuss a question before a body which had no power to control it. He was well known at home to be opposed to that institution, as believing it to be an evil, as well to the slave-owner as to the slave. He believed it to be a national as well as an individual evil; a social as well as a political evil. But it had been sanctioned by our revolutionary forefathers in solemn national compact. It belonged to the compromises of the Constitution. It was protected by a sacred mantle, placed there by better men, he feared, than lived at the present day. He would not disturb it. Palsied be the hand that would.

Mr. H. would next advert to the singular and extraordinary speech of the gentleman from Mississippi, [Mr. TOMPKINS,] which the gentleman had himself confessed was prepared for a very different subject, but which he seemed to think would suit for any subject, and he had therefore "rung it in" on this. And, indeed, he (Mr. H.) was not prepared to say that it would not suit one subject as well as another; but he had not been able to discover yet what particular subject it did suit, and that seemed the difficulty with the honorable gentleman himself. But having brought his grist to the mill, he seemed determined to grind it out while he had the steam up, whether the question then before the House bore any relation to it or not. He would not play the clown for the amusement of the House, nor would he play the part of a political mountebank, here or elsewhere, for any purpose. He could not refrain from referring to the allusions of the member from Mississippi to the gentleman from Alabama, [Mr. HOUSTON,] proverbially known on this floor as respectful and courteous to gentlemen on all sides of the House, who had prepared and cited some authority in support of the refusal of the President to give to the Whigs of this House certain information in regard to the instructions of Mr. Slidell, as minister to Mexico, which he (the President) believed would be prejudicial to the public interest. This the member from Mississippi was pleased to characterize, in his classical style, the "*dog-eared*" authority furnished by the President himself. It was in vain that the gentleman from Alabama explained, and assured the gentleman that the authority had been looked up by himself alone, and wholly without the knowl-

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edge of the President; still the member from Mississippi persisted in the charge, and repeated it—"the *dog-eared* authority of the President"—a half-dozen times, after the disavowal of it by the gentleman from Alabama. Now, Mr. H. gave it as his opinion, nay, he would say, that there was not any more of the *dog* about the gentleman's speech than the *ears;* and he made the assertion, because he found the gentleman had laid himself liable to the opposite inference.

There lives in the South (continued Mr. H.) a plain, honest, straightforward, independent planter, who was a member of this House during the last and the preceding Congresses. In the last canvass he was a candidate for reëlection, and, as rumor has it, his competitor, who travelled with him, addressed the good people of the district somewhat in this wise: "Gentlemen, I believe there is no great difference of opinion between Mr. Roberts and myself. I am in favor of the war; the bank is not in issue; to the tariff I am for giving a fair trial. The difference is, indeed, so little upon any national question, that you are left to decide this election pretty much with reference to our personal qualifications. I think, fellow-citizens, that, to sustain himself well and give character and weight to his position, your representative should possess the qualification of an orator. I consider this indispensably requisite for a member of Congress. We shall both address you to-day, and make a display of our ability in this respect. You will hear us, and I beg of you to decide upon our merits accordingly." Thus was the issue made, and the result was, the orator beat the sturdy planter. Well, the orator is here; he has prepared himself for a display, that he may gain a reputation here, and worthily acquit himself in the eyes of his admiring constituents at home, after the plan laid down in his electioneering campaign. The effort has been made; the maiden speech has been delivered; the House has heard it; the world will shortly have the benefit of it; and fond and confiding constituents will eagerly seek its perusal. Now, Mr. H. would not be disrespectful towards the gentleman; but he would say to him, humorously, as he seemed to be fond of fun, and had amused the House a good deal the other day, that his remarks had reminded him (Mr. H.) very much of the hollow sounds proceeding from an empty cider barrel, which might have been drained of its contents in the campaign of 1840.

The gentleman talked of Executive prerogatives, and would appear before the committee as a sage expounder of the Constitution. Mr. H. had once heard a pun; it was this: "An Irish potato was laid upon Vattel's Laws of Nations, and pronounced a common *tater* upon the work;" so of the gentleman's effort as a commentator on Executive prerogative and constitutional law—it had but little more reference to the question in hand than a common Irish potato laid upon the cover of a book would have to the contents within. We read, said Mr. H., that once upon a time the "asses snuffed up the east wind." A clergyman in olden time asked his servant what he could infer from this passage of Scripture. After a little reflection, he replied that his inference would be, that it would be a long time before they would grow fat upon it. Now, he would say, in all due respect, that if the gentleman's constituents expected to grow fat themselves, or feast the nation upon such exhibitions, there was, in his judgment, as little prospect of realizing their expectations, as there was of those self-same asses growing fat when they snuffed the breezes from the east.

The gentleman had quoted Shakspeare, and had endeavored to imitate some of his characters. Mr. H. remembered one of those characters, who reminded him very much of the member from Mississippi, of whom it said, "Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat in two bushels of chaff; you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search."

Mr. H. would next advert to some of the remarks of the gentleman from Tennessee, [Mr. Barrow.] The gentleman said, as parties now stood, particularly in the Senate of the United States, they could not impeach the President for a violation of the Constitution in reference to the Mexican war; but if they had a majority of Whigs in the Senate, then they would bring forward articles of impeachment. What did he mean by this? That a Democrat was incompetent to sit on a jury to try the President of the United States, if he had violated the Constitution? That was obviously his meaning. He presumed the gentleman was a lawyer; would he challenge a juror because he was a Democrat, when the individual to be tried was also a Democrat? He would, on the ground which he had taken on this question!

Mr. H. had long suspected that the Federal party, for the sake of office and power, would, if they dared to do so, impeach the President, break him of his office, call home the army in disgrace, and abandon even Texas to her fate. And now the ears of the nation were saluted with the bold avowal that all this would be done, if they only had a majority in both Houses of Congress. For the sake of the honor and character of the nation, he hoped they would never have the power to inflict such a wound upon her. The Whig—the Federal—party, it seemed, had prepared a gallows on which to hang the President of the United States as high as Haman. Let them beware, lest, like Haman, they be hung upon their own gallows.

The gentleman from Tennessee said he would have voted for the act recognizing the existence of the war, and making appropriations to carry it on, under "protest." And what was that protest? The gentleman would have been unwilling to vote for it with a preamble declaring "whereas war exists by the act of Mexico;" but not if it had said, "whereas, by the act of the President of the United States, an unconstitutional war exists: therefore resolved that men and money be appropriated to prosecute it," he would have voted it. The gentleman would not like to have voted for it when it declared the truth; he revolted at the idea of voting for the prosecution of an honorable war, forced upon us by Mexico; but he would have voted to prosecute a dishonorable war, begun by the President of the United States! That was his position. Let him make the best of it.

It is in vain for gentlemen to say they voted for the war to rescue General Taylor from his perilous position. The forces ordered by General Gaines and the requisitions by Taylor himself were more than enough for this purpose. It is an idle pretext, and looks more like the efforts of a drowning man

grasping at straws, than the reasoning of an honest and candid mind. If their purpose had only been relief to General Taylor, why vote fifty thousand men and ten millions of money, and order the President at the same time to prosecute the war vigorously? If the President had violated the Constitution, and ordered the army beyond our limits, what was the obvious duty of Congress? Clearly to order it back, and repair the wrong. Suppose the President should order our fleet to bombard the city of Liverpool, it would be a stronger case than this, to be sure, but precisely similar. Would that be war with Great Britain? Not at all, unless Congress agreed to recognize it as war. What would be the duty of Congress in that case? Any man can give the answer: order the navy home, and impeach the President, and inform the injured nation that the act was in derogation of Executive authority, in violation of the will of the nation. So in this case, any one of ordinary sense can at once see the plain and unmistakable duty of the Whig party, if they believed what they now say they did; it was to withdraw the army, and refuse all appropriations for the prosecution of the war. The corporal's guard, who voted against the original recognition of war, and who have since opposed the granting of all supplies, are the only consistent persons to be found among the opposers of the war. Those who voted for it, and have since voted supplies, are forever estopped from saying one word against its inception. If the President was guilty of beginning an unconstitutional and unnecessary war, they were guilty of helping him to prosecute it. The receiver of stolen goods is as bad as the thief. How is the distinction to be drawn between the President, who made this war, (as they say,) and the Whigs in Congress who voted him the men and money to carry it on? Honest and candid men will be able to find none.

The gentleman from Tennessee (said Mr. H.) has told the House that he blushed for the course of the President in confining the appointments in the army almost exclusively to the Democratic party. He thought the gentleman would do well to reserve his blushes for his own party friends. How was it in Kentucky, where a Whig Governor had made sixteen Whig appointments in the army and not a single Democrat, while the President had appointed a number of Whigs from that State—among them he remembered Major Berbridge and Captain Crittenden, (son of the Hon. John J. Crittenden,) Captain Turpin, and he knew not how many others. Could not the gentleman blush a little for his own partisan Governor, in view of these facts? He would allude also to North Carolina, where a Whig Governor, he believed, was guilty of the same thing.

Mr. BOYDON said one Democrat had been appointed from that State.

Mr. HENLEY remembered well that the appointments there had been made over the earnest remonstrances of the soldiers themselves, who, being Democrats, were compelled to serve under Whig officers who had denounced the war as unjust. Had the gentleman from Tennessee any blushes for such conduct as this? Look again at Virginia: there, as he was informed, a Democratic Governor had appointed an equal number from each of the political parties to command the volunteers from that State.

Mr. PRESTON said the power of appointment in Virginia was vested in the Council, and not in the Governor.

Mr. HENLEY. Was it a Democratic Council?

Mr. PRESTON. It was.

Mr. HENLEY. Very well; that is what I want. It was Democratic, and did not proscribe the Whigs. Where are the blushes of the gentleman from Tennessee now? Mr. H. was not himself opposed to the party in power choosing their own political friends for appointments to office, but he despised to hear the hypocritical cry of Federal orators against proscription, when in fact they were the most proscriptive party on earth. If the number of Whig appointments had been smaller than it was, he would have sustained it; in fact he would have been glad to have seen no Whig appointed who did not acknowledge the justice of the war.

What ground was there, he would ask in all sincerity, for this charge of proscription? Were not Scott and Wool both Whigs? And had they not been appointed by the President to take commands in the army? There was General Cadwalader, of Pennsylvania; but he was a neutral; and the gentleman said he had no confidence in neutrals. General Taylor was also one of the President's appointments; and he, too, was a neutral. The gentleman has no respect for such men, and yet he is for Taylor for President. Strange inconsistency! Mr. H. would remark, that the gentleman's speech, with reference to the war, was a fair illustration of the views of the Whig party on that subject. He was for the war and against it; he was for more territory, and he was opposed to more territory; he was for indemnity, and he was opposed to indemnity: in short, he was for and against everything, and seemed to have no settled opinion of his own: and so it was with the whole party. He would read and place in juxtaposition some of the gentleman's sentiments, as he had expressed them. Mr. BARROW says:

"I am willing to give a liberal bounty; any amount that may be necessary to raise the army we have to that number which General Scott says is sufficient to overrun all Mexico."

"Genoral Scott says 50,000 men are sufficient for the conquest of all Mexico."

"I am willing to vote thirty new regiments instead of ten."

"The President, with all this force at his disposal, wants 30,000 more."

"I *warn* gentlemen, before they take the step they are now about to take," [for the acquisition of territory.]

"It was the desire for new territory that elected Mr. Polk."

"If the President's design is to subjugate and overrun—to swallow up or absorb—Mexico, I am utterly opposed to any such purpose."

"I am for raising our army to that number."

"We have now 50,000 bayonets in the field."

"I go for 30,000 more, if they are volunteers." [That will increase the army to 70,000.]

"I am willing to take such territory as may be deemed necessary for our purposes, (by treaty.")

"And for that *retribution* awaits him either in this world or in the world to come."

The gentleman (said Mr. H.) had consigned Mr. Polk to the regions of the damned for desiring more territory, while he had himself expressed a perfect willingness to take as much territory as we wanted. Surely, Mr. Polk wanted no more. This reminded Mr. H. of the French bishop, who being also a prince, said, "as bishop, I may not shed man's blood; but as prince, I will lead my soldiers to battle." His servant, who did not comprehend

this apparent inconsistency, inquired with great simplicity, "what would become of the bishop when Satan came for the prince?" So he should be glad to inquire, what was to be the fate of Mr. BARROW when the devil shall go down into Tennessee after Mr. Polk for desiring more territory, he [Mr. B.] being equally guilty by his own confession?

The CHAIRMAN here reminded Mr. H. that it was not in order to mention the name of a member.

Mr. HENLEY. I am not speaking, sir, of the member from Tennessee, but of Mr. BARROW, when he shall return home, and that great day of retribution shall have arrived of which he has so confidently spoken.

The gentleman from Tennessee had told the House that the Whigs had placed it upon record, that this war was unconstitutional and unnecessary; that they had done this to condemn the President, and there let it remain to blister his name in all time. Mr. Clay (continued Mr. H.) had already blistered the Whig name by declaring, that on a former occasion they had "*voted a lie.*" The country would say, that in this instance they had also voted a *lie;* and that would be a blister that would turn to a putrid sore upon the corrupt carcass of Whigery, or he was much mistaken in the signs of the times.

But he must proceed. He would next call the attention of the committee and of the country to the approaching canvass for the Presidency. Would General Taylor be the candidate of the Whig or Federal party, was a question often asked, and he proposed to submit a few remarks in relation to the probability, or rather he would say the improbability, of such a result. They had heard much of the dangers to be apprehended from military chieftains. War, pestilence, and famine had been considered by this same Federal party as preferable in a republican Government to the election of a military chieftain to the Presidency. Would these same men take a general out of the army, and in time of war, without any civil qualification whatever, and who, indeed, professed utter ignorance upon all political subjects, and whose military renown was exclusively a harvest gathered in a war which they themselves believed was in violation of the Constitution and in derogation of right and justice? Could they place such a man at the head of their ticket, and then have the impudence to go before the country and endeavor to persuade the people of the honesty and purity of their intentions and purposes? No; it could not be so. They had not yet lost all sense of shame; and until they had, they could not be guilty of such an absurdity. They might have a very poor appreciation of the intelligence of the people, but he imagined they could hardly have placed it at so low an ebb as to imagine them so easily gulled and humbugged as that.

The running of General Taylor as the Whig candidate would be a very common military evolution called changing front. The order for it would be, Attention! Federalists, Whigs, Native Americans, Abolitionists, Slave-holders, Bank men, anti-Bank men, War men, anti-War men! Attention the whole! Take position—left in front—right wing thrown back! Form open column of companies—march! Company No. 1, No-party men, Captain Bennett, editor New York Herald; company No. 2, Native Americans, no officers; company No. 3, Bank men, Captain J. Watson Webb; company No. 4, anti-Bank men, in confusion; company No. 5, protective Tariff party, in mourning; company No. 6, war Federalists, armed with cornstalks; company No. 7, friends of Peace; company No. 8, all who believe Santa Anna is the greatest general in the world; company No. 9, all who are opposed to the acquisition of territory; company No. 10, those who are for as much territory as we want; company No. 11, those who never thought their country right in any contest with a foreign nation; company No. 12, Southern fanatics, who go for Taylor because he is a slaveholder; company No. 13, Quakers; company No. 14, Whigs, in disorder; company No. 15, being the extreme left, old Federal party, bearing a banner, with this inscription, "*Where shall I go?*" This grand military cavalcade would be under the chief command of General John C. Calhoun, who is the only man who has advocated General Taylor's defensive line. It would march to the tune of "Hail Columbia!" in front; and "Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound!" would be heard to issue from the rear.

Mr. H. cited the conversation of three Whig editors, not long since, in this city. One of them said he would not support General Taylor, unless he would avow his political sentiments. Another said he would not support him, unless he pledged himself to oppose the acquisition of territory and the extension of slavery. The third said he would go for him anyhow—he would "*go it blind.*" So he thought it would be with the Whig party; two-thirds of them would adhere to their principles, while there might be one-third who would *go it blind*, regardless of all principle. The editor of the New York Tribune, a conscientious and an able Whig leader, had avowed, positively, that he would not support Taylor, unless he was run as a Whig, pledged as a Whig, and agreed to carry out Whig principles. So it would be with honest Whigs all over the country. They were not again to be caught in the "no-principles-for-the-public-eye" trap. They remembered too well the time they went for Tyler "therefore, without a why or a wherefore," and they had sworn, in the bitterness of their disappointment, *never* again to vote blindly for any man for this high office. They were afraid of being again "Tylerized."

Mr. H. next adverted to the fact, that General Taylor had been nominated by a committee in Alabama, upon the sole ground that he was a southern man, a slave-holder, and opposed to the Wilmot proviso. He knew that this had been done only by those who were as fanatical upon the one extreme of slavery as were the abolitionists of the North upon the other; while in the North, he knew that many Whigs had pledged themselves to vote for no man who was not in favor of the Wilmot proviso.

The Whig party, said Mr. H., will hold a convention. Three-fourths of the party are in favor of it. Will they, can they nominate General Taylor? He would read two extracts from letters written by the General, which would be conclusive on that point:

"In no case can I permit myself to be the candidate of any party, or yield myself to party schemes."—*Taylor's Letter to the Editor of the Cincinnati Signal, dated May* 18, 1847.

On the 29th of May, 1847, he again said:

"But I *will not* be the candidate of any party or clique."

The Whigs, said Mr. H., had determined to make a party nomination, and General Taylor had told them, in distinct and positive terms, that he would not be a party candidate. They had avowed their determination to take no man, whose political opinions were not known. General Taylor had told them that he would not declare his sentiments, for the very good reason that he had none to declare. He therefore concluded that General Taylor could not be the Whig candidate, unless they abandoned their party organization, held no convention, and agreed to run a no-party man; or that General Taylor should falsify his own declarations, and agree to take a party nomination, and pledge himself to party measures, which he has already said he will not do. The Whigs could not run General Taylor without falsifying their own position, or placing him in a situation to falsify his. He did not believe it ever had been the intention of the Whig party to run General Taylor; they had only used him as a *stool-pigeon*. The time was not far distant when they would cast him off, and we should hear no more of their pretended admiration of his character and worth.

Of General Taylor, personally, he would not speak. That he was an honest, brave, and high-minded man, and that he had done his country good service in this just war in which we are engaged, he did not doubt; but as to the battle of Buena Vista, no one man was entitled to the honors of that memorable day; it was the boys that carried the knapsacks that fought that battle. It was the noble daring, the unparalleled bravery of the volunteers, that won that brilliant achievement.

The Whigs, said Mr. H., are united and determined upon one thing; they know the general desire of the people of this country for peace; they know the innate love of justice which dwells in the hearts of the great mass of our people; they know that an unjust, an unnecessary, and an unconstitutional war, would be condemned, and its authors repudiated and rejected as unworthy of public confidence. They think they see, in the event of being able to fix this impression upon the public mind, some hope of the downfall of the Democratic party, and their own accession to power. They are determined to make the experiment. But they act without concert or arrangement. Their efforts are ridiculous, impotent, and silly. They agree in saying the President made the war; that is the burden of their song—the chorus of which is, "'tis Polk's war;" and here they all chime in with the greatest harmony. But how is it Polk's war? One says it was caused by the annexation of Texas; another, that it was the result of sending a minister instead of a commissioner to Mexico, to settle our difficulties; a third, that it was produced by the march of our army to the Rio Grande; a fourth says, it was not the movement to the Rio Grande that caused the commencement of hostilities, but it was obviously occasioned by the neglect of the President to order a much larger number of troops there than he did; a fifth one, that it was caused by the ordering of a portion of your fleet into the Gulf to watch the movements of Mexico, and be ready for any emergency that might arise; a sixth swears that the President made it to distinguish his Administration and secure a reëlection; while a seventh asserts that it is a war for the extension of slavery; and an eighth, that it is a Democratic war, waged for the acquisition of territory, and an extension of the "area of freedom."

Thus do those gentlemen agree that it is the President's war, but differ as wide as the poles as to how the act was produced; and so it is, sir, with all those who attempt to prove a falsehood. Their position is similar to that of half a dozen persons conspiring to prove an individual guilty of murder: they agree upon the main point; all saw him kill the man, and this each one testifies to most positively; but they are sworn separately, and, upon the cross-examination, the first says, he shot him; the second, that he felled him with a club; the third, he stabbed him with a bowie knife; the fourth, he broke his skull with an axe; and so on.

Now, Mr. Chairman, these witnesses have impeached their own veracity, invalidated their own testimony, and would be hooted and hissed out of a court of justice. So it is with those who have volunteered to swear that the President is the author of the war. They differ so widely, and their testimony is so contradictory, that the people are already growing indignant at their pitiful, contemptible and pettifogging attempts at prevarication and falsehood, regarding it as an insult to their intelligence, and an outrage upon truth, to offer to prove an assertion or sustain a position by testimony which would subject the same number of witnesses in a court of justice to an indictment for perjury.

Mr. H. next proceeded to remark, that much had been said on the subject of treason. The Constitution defined it thus: "Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort." The Federal party, during the war of 1812, were guilty of treason. He believed none of them had been caught in the overt act; none of them had been hung for treason, though many deserved it. The treason of the Federal party at that time consisted mainly in the denunciations of the war as unholy, unjust, and abominable—as being the President's war; in asserting that it was unnecessary, and ought to have been avoided. This was not treason in the eye of the law, and ought not to have been; but it was treason in the judgment of the people; and those who were guilty of it were consigned to utter oblivion, amidst the hisses, the scoffs, and scorns of an indignant and outraged public sentiment. He asked no other punishment for those who were playing the part of traitors now. He had full confidence in the patriotism and justice of the people. All he desired was, to place them upon trial before the same tribunal that had passed judgment upon the old Federal party, for opposing their own country in the late war; and for the part he had borne in sustaining this war, or in originating it, if you please, Mr. H. was ready for trial at the same enlightened tribunal. The grossest act of treason committed by the old Federal party was that of burning blue lights upon the bleak coasts of New England as signals to inform the enemy of the movement of our shipping. It had been often denied that this revolting crime had ever been committed; and there were many honest people who did not believe that any American citizen could ever have been guilty of so diabolical a deed. That there might be no longer any dispute about it, he would introduce proof of the fact that no one could

dispute. He quoted from page 287, Military and Naval Letters, an extract of a letter from Commodore Stephen Decatur to the Secretary of the Navy, viz:

"NEW LONDON, *December* 20, 1813.

"Some few nights since, the weather promised an opportunity for this squadron to get to sea, and it was said on shore that we intended to make the attempt. In the course of the evening, two BLUE LIGHTS were burnt on both the points at the harbor's mouth, as signals to the enemy; and there is not a doubt but that they have, by signals and otherwise, instantaneous information of our movements. Great but unsuccessful exertions have been made to detect those who communicate with the enemy by signal. The editor of the New London Gazette, to alarm them, and in the hope to prevent the repetition of those signals, stated in that newspaper, that they had been observed, and ventured to denounce those who had made them in animated and indignant terms. The consequence is, that he has incurred the express censure of some of his neighbors. Notwithstanding these signals have been repeated, and have been seen by twenty persons at least in this squadron, there are men in New London who affect to have the hardihood to disbelieve it, and the effrontery to avow their disbelief. I have the honor to be, &c., STEPHEN DECATUR.

"Hon. WILLIAM JONES, *Secretary of the Navy.*"

This was a part of the treason of the Federal party in the last war. The treason of which the present Federal party was guilty, was not, so far as he knew, so flagrant and outrageous as that to which he had just alluded. It was, however, of the same character, but criminal only in a less degree. The speeches made in this Hall to prove the enemy right, and our own country wrong, in the origin of this war, were *blue lights* burned here to inform the enemy that they had sympathizers in this Hall, ready to redress the wrongs we are now inflicting upon them, so soon as they shall have power. The vote here the other day, that the war was unnecessary and unconstitutional, was a *blue light*, to inform Mexico that the Whig [Federal] party had the majority in one branch of the American Congress. The denunciations of the war by the Federal press, and their shouts of victory over this Federal majority here, were so many *blue lights*, as signals to the enemy, that their friends in the United States were gaining strength, and would shortly withdraw the army, and put an end to the war. The anti-war Federalists were called blue-light Federalists; he would therefore call the party which corresponded with it now, blue-light Whigs. It was saying to Mexico, We are fully sensible of the injustice our country is doing you; a majority of our people condemn it entirely; and if you but hold on a short time, we shall be in power, and we shall ask none of your territory, no indemnity for the expenses of the war, and no security for the future. Our army will be immediately withdrawn, and you can settle with us upon your own terms. This was what Mexico understood from the course of the Federal party; and how could she understand it in any other light. The Mexican people could not understand the working of our Government. They knew that revolutions were of frequent occurrence at home, and they were daily expecting a revolution in favor of the Whig party on the war question, which would at once end the war in their favor. Hence, in his opinion, their extraordinary obstinacy in refusing to make peace. He did not hesitate to declare it to the world, as his firm belief, that if the Whig party had given their hearty concurrence to the war, and its vigorous prosecution, we should have had peace long since. Indeed, he doubted whether we ever should have had war, but for the declarations of the Whigs, that the annexation of Texas was unjust to Mexico, and just cause for war on her part against us. He was sure the prolongation of the war was produced by Whig policy at home. It had prevented peace up to this time, and would continue to prevent it, as long as Mexico had any hope of the Whig party getting into power here. He believed sincerely that the policy of the Whigs had produced incalculable mischief in this country, and had led Mexico into a dilemma from which she could never recover. Gentlemen, said Mr. H., ask us in derision, When will this war terminate? and tell us that Mexico is conquered, and still we have no peace. He would answer that question. We would never have peace till we conquered this seditious party at home, and convinced Mexico that she could no longer look to this country for "aid and comfort."

From the battle of Palo Alto up to this time, every one supposed we should have peace after each successive victory. General Taylor thought so at the capitulation of Monterey. General Scott thought so, when he paused, three days before the city of Mexico, with his brave army panting for victory, to give them a chance to save their capital from capture. In all this we had been doomed to disappointment. The war was still in existence. The Whigs were in a great degree responsible for this state of things. Their policy had been productive of incalculable injury to this country, and must, if persevered in, result in the utter downfall and ruin of Mexico. The brilliant and unequalled victories of Palo Alto, of Monterey, of Buena Vista, of Vera Cruz, of Cerro Gordo, of Contreras, of Churubusco, of Chepultepec, of the city of Mexico, had followed each other in rapid succession, and still we had no peace. He had heard, that after the storming of Cerro Gordo, a large number of copies of the speech of THOMAS CORWIN against the war, was found in Santa Anna's trunk. Young Doniphan, a printer, who was taken prisoner on the Rio Grande, and sold to a Mexican editor in the south of Mexico, was asked, while engaged in the printing office "setting up" Corwin's speech, by the Governor of the department, how long he thought it would be before CORWIN would be President of the United States. The paper wrapper of a cartridge, a missile of death fired at us at Buena Vista, and picked up on the battle-field by one of his constituents, was a part of WEBSTER's Philadelphia speech. His authority for this was Major Cravins, Captain Davis, and Lieutenant Shanks, of the Indiana volunteers. The paper was still in possession of one of these gentlemen. What effect did these things have upon our gallant army in Mexico? Colonel Doniphan, of the Missouri volunteers, said it was chilling and freezing, and that no one could imagine his feelings, when, two thousand miles from home, in an enemy's country, and in a city numbering twenty times his own force, he received CORWIN'S speech, denouncing his gallant little band as little better than thieves and robbers. He asserted that the policy of those who pretended to be the friends of peace at home tended to prolong the war eternally. Lieutenant Colonel Lane, a Whig from Indiana, had uttered similar patriotic sentiments, pronouncing all who pursued such a course traitors at heart, whatever their professions might be. Colonel Morgan, of Ohio, in a speech at Columbus,

said, "those who advocate the withholding supplies, or withdrawing our army, disguise their sentiments as they may, are *traitors* at heart. The man who would not support his country when engaged in a just war *is a traitor*, and lacks the courage to give that 'aid and comfort' to the enemy, the punishment of which is death by the hangman. This language was strong, but it was true." Colonel Wynkoop, of Pennsylvania, had expressed similar opinions; the whole army entertained them, and every patriotic heart in the nation beat in unison with these sentiments.

An officer of high rank, who has just returned from Mexico, says he saw in the National Palace, in that city, more than four hundred extracts from Whig speeches and Whig newspapers, against the war, bound together in a book, and preserved in the public archives there, which had been furnished to the Mexican Secretary of State by some tory traitor in the United States.

But he could not dwell longer upon this branch of the subject; he left it for the people in their retirement to pronounce such judgment as they deemed adequate to the offence against all such as would thus place themselves in a hostile attitude to their own country in time of war. The Whigs pretend to deprecate the subjugation of all of Mexico. Their policy is fast tending to that end, and it will shortly be inevitable, unless they change their course. Before the battles of the 8th and 9th of May, a settlement of all our difficulties would have been easy, without despoiling Mexico of a foot of her territory. After the battle of Monterey, she might have settled by ceding us only a port for commercial purposes on the Pacific. After the battle of Buena Vista and the fall of Vera Cruz, New Mexico and Upper California might have been added to our demands; but now, when the capital is in our possession, and the army is spreading itself over the whole country, we may well demand the line of the Sierra Madre from the Gulf to the parallel of $36\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north latitude, and thence west to the Pacific; and should the obstinacy of Mexico, and the treason of Federalism, continue the war much longer, what alternative is there but the conquest and subjugation of all Mexico. He somewhat doubted if the fate of the Mexican Government was not even now inevitable. It was possible her nationality was already forever gone. If peace was not soon made, her fate was sealed. Each day was rendering this result more and more certain. Each day's delay here, in passing the army bill and granting supplies, and every Whig speech against the war, was signing the death knell of Mexican nationality.

Our people had already overrun three-fourths of the country; they had breathed the pure refreshing atmosphere of the valley of Mexico, and had witnessed the extraordinary fertility of her lowlands. They had seen beautiful orange groves; her rich gold and silver mines had not escaped their notice. They had seen with what little labor all the wants of nature could be supplied. They had seen a semi-barbarous population, but little advanced beyond the condition, and but little better qualified to enjoy the blessings of civilization than the North American Indians, who once held undisputed sway in this proud land of ours. Give the Yankee once foothold in a country like this, and he doubted if you could either scare, coax, or drive him out. It was doubtful whether the recalling your army now would save her Government from annihilation. It was doubtful whether it was practicable now, and he was sure it would not be right, to restore Mexico to the condition in which we found her, without law, order, morality, virtue, or safety to life or property.

The progress of the war and its consequences had already arrived at that point at which many of the citizens of Mexico themselves sincerely desired to be placed under our protection. They were now convinced that even our military rule was infinitely preferable to their civil government, and they would deprecate nothing so much as the withdrawal of our army, and restoration of Mexican authority. If the war continued much longer, the whole of Mexico would fall into our hands; and it would become our duty to keep it, to control it, to govern it, to extend the blessings of our free institutions over it. Yes, he believed, if forced to this condition by her own obstinacy, or the treasonable designs of her pretended friends, that we could govern and control Mexico, and ultimately, without danger, incorporate her into our glorious Union, and present to the world an ocean-bound Republic; the dominions of the American eagle could safely be extended from the Canadas to the Pacific, and the stars and stripes float proudly on every breeze, from ocean to ocean. He was not advocating this; but if forced upon us, let it come. Liberty would be the gainer by it. It would throw the sheltering wing of our bird of liberty over a larger area; it would give happy homes and good laws to millions who do not now enjoy them. It would introduce into that benighted region, the schoolmaster, the minister of the gospel, and a free press. Wherever they went, he was sure prosperity and happiness would be found. He meant no reflection upon the established religion of that country; but in four hundred years it had failed to accomplish much for the original inhabitants, and he was willing to see the Protestant, whose labors had been so successful, and who had done so much for the happiness of mankind, placed side by side, with the Catholic of Mexico, and let them vie with each other in ameliorating the condition of those people. He did not, therefore, look upon even the conquest of all Mexico with half the alarm which seemed to be frightening the imaginations of some gentlemen.

But his remarks had already been extended beyond the limits he had prescribed for them in the beginning. He would conclude by reading an extract from the Olive Branch, by Mathew Cary, addressed to the Federal party in 1814, as precisely applicable to the Federal party of the present day: "YOUR PARTY RISES AS YOUR COUNTRY SINKS; *it sinks as your country rises.*"

This is an awful fact. It cannot fail to rend the heart of every public-spirited man among you. For the love of God and of peace, by the shade of Washington, by that country that contains all you hold dear, I adjure you to weigh well this sentence: YOU SINK AS YOUR COUNTRY RISES. Yes, it is indisputably so. It is a terrific and appalling truth. *And you rise as that despoiling, lacerated, perishing, betrayed* country sinks. "I would rather be a dog, and bay the moon, than stand in this odious predicament."

How was it (said Mr. H.) with the present Federal or Whig party? Had they ever prospered as a party except when the interests of the people languished? They came into power in 1840 amidst

panic, distress, and pecuniary embarrassment. They were now raising the huc-and-cry of panic, of prostrated credit, and of ruin, and had no hope of reaching the goal of their ambition except upon the ruins of the character, the prosperity, and the honor of their country. Mathew Cary said he would "rather be a dog, and bay the moon, than belong to such a party."

He would leave it to the people to determine how far the conduct of the modern Whigs was identical with that of the old Federalists, and to pronounce judgment accordingly. They had pronounced a righteous judgment against that party that opposed the late war, and he did not doubt they would deal with equal justice towards modern Whigery, Federalism, and all its allies.

If what he had said seemed to be harsh, he would remark, that it had no application to those honest and patriotic Whigs who stood by their country in this war, (of whom he was proud to say there were many,) but was intended solely to apply to those who had taken the side of Mexico, and endeavored to slander and disgrace the American name, and embarrass, weaken, and cripple the Government in its war measures. To those his remarks were intended to apply. He regretted that their conduct had justified what he had said. But believing all he had said to be just and true, he had no apology to make. It was a time when plain talk was demanded by the occasion. He had spoken plainly. He was ready to abide by the result. If his accusations against the Mexican party in this country were not well founded, let the people condemn him and not them. Harsh, harsh justice was all that he demanded, and by her stern decrees he was ready to abide.

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